1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

hands of an Andaman Islander is a very efficient implement, producing a beautifully smooth and even surface.

Of wood the Andamanese formerly made knives and arrow-points. The knives were made of a slip of bamboo or cane shaped and sharpened with a *Cyrena* shell. Such knives were used for cutting meat and apparently for no other purpose. A knife was always attached by a short length of cord to a skewer of pointed *Areca* wood. The double implement was used in cooking and eating, the skewer serving to lift pieces of meat in and out of a pot, while the knife served to cut them. At the present time the cane or bamboo knife is replaced by a knife made from hoop-iron, but the shape of the original implement is retained as nearly as possible and a skewer of *Areca* wood is generally attached to it.

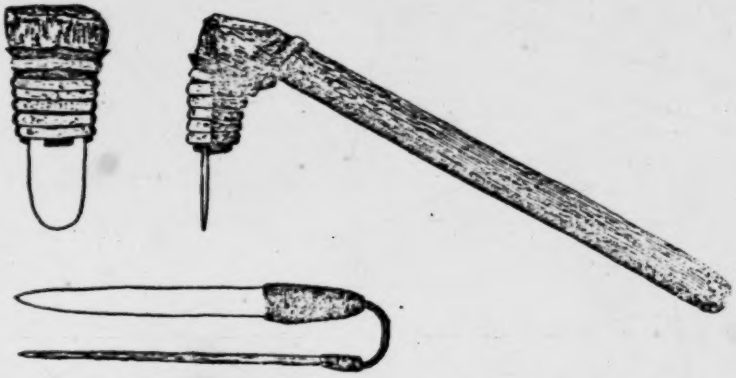

Fig. 28. Adze and knife

As has been already stated the Andamanese formerly used hard wood such as that of the *Areca* palm for the points and heads of their arrows. They do not seem to have made use of bamboo in this way.

At the present time iron is used for the blades of adzes, for the heads and barbs of pig-arrows, the points of fish-arrows, the heads of harpoons, and for knives. The method of working the metal is apparently exactly the same as the method they formerly used for working shell and bone. For the head of a pig-arrow a suitable piece of iron is taken and a fragment of about the right size is broken off by means of a stone hammer. This is then roughly broken into the required shape, no heat being used, and no advantage being taken of the malleability of the metal. The next process is to grind it on a

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

415 The pots are used for cooking, i.e. for boiling meat and vegetables. In the North Andaman small pots are specially made for melting the composition used for covering the binding on the heads of arrows.

415 171 Neither the Semang nor the Philippine Negritos make any kind of pottery. The origin of Andamanese pottery therefore is a problem of some interest. It is almost certain that the early Andamanese were acquainted with pottery before they were divided into the Great Andaman and Little Andaman Divisions. One of the very few words which is the same in all Andamanese languages is the word for pot, *bučυ* in the Little Andaman, *buǰ* in Aka-Bea and *peč* in Aka-Jeru. The most reasonable hypothesis would therefore seem to be that the Andamanese learnt the method of making pottery by coiling before they reached the Andaman Islands but after they had become separated

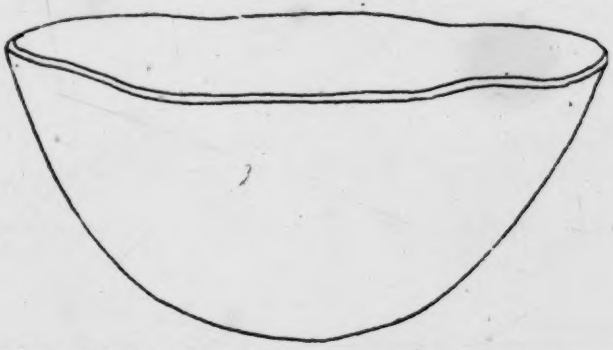

Fig. 39. Shape of South Andaman pot; actual diameter 24 cm.

from that part of the Negrito race from which the Semang and the Philippine Negritos are descended. Of course it is possible that the art of pottery may have been an original possession of the Negritos and that the Semang and Philippine Negritos may have lost it. A people could easily lose the art if they were compelled in the course of their migrations to spend three or four generations in a region that lacked clay suitable for the purpose.

415 [322] The Andamanese make buckets of wood, which they use for carrying and holding a supply of water. A solid piece is cut from the trunk of a soft-wooded tree and is hollowed out with a chisel made by attaching the blade of an adze to a stick. The natural form of the wood is retained, only the bark being removed from the outside while the inside is chiselled out to leave sides of about a centimetre thick and a bottom of somewhat greater thickness. In order to render the bottom

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

of the bucket water-tight the natives of the Little Andaman pour over it on the inside melted bees'-wax. The natives of the Great Andaman use for this purpose the same composition with which they cover the bindings of their arrows, which certainly is superior to bees'-wax. 415

A bucket of the shape used in the Great Andaman is shown in Plate VII, on the left. A strip of cane is attached round the middle of the bucket, and to this in turn is attached another strip of cane which, being passed across the front of the chest, enables the bucket to be carried on the back.

The buckets of the Little Andaman are cut with thinner sides than those of the Great Andaman. A strip of cane is fastened round the bucket near the top. From this two other strips of cane are attached by both ends, passing under the bottom, and a third strip is attached which passes over the head and supports the bucket when it is carried on the back. In the Little Andaman the outside of the bucket is charred with fire.

Occasionally pieces of the giant bamboo, which does not grow in the Andamans, are found on the shore, having drifted from the Burma coast. When a sound piece is found it is made into buckets each formed of a single joint.

Water vessels are made from bamboos that do grow in the islands. A length of bamboo of good diameter is cut, containing three joints. The partition of the lowest node is preserved to serve as a bottom, and the other partitions are broken through with an arrow. This is the usual vessel used for carrying water on a journey by land or in a canoe, and for keeping a supply of drinking water in the hut.

A single joint of the same kind of bamboo is used as a cooking vessel. It is cleaned, washed, and dried, and is then filled with meat tightly packed. The top is closed with leaves and the bamboo is placed on the fire until the meat is cooked. Meat is not cooked in this way for immediate consumption. It will keep for twenty-four hours or even longer if not opened. To obtain the contents the bamboo is split open with an adze.

Trays used for food are cut from soft wood of a species of *Sterculia* with an adze. They are shallow and somewhat long and narrow, with pointed ends. [322]

A large *Pinna* shell is occasionally used as a tray or dish for holding food, or for mixing clay with water for painting. A *Nautilus* shell forms a fairly convenient cup or drinking vessel and is frequently used for that purpose, as well as for baling out water from a canoe.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

bamboo (male species preferred), often 18 feet or more in length; for the reception of the harpoon a socket is prepared at the small end, which is strengthened by pieces of mangrove wood, over which strips of cane are neatly tied. The harpoon consists of a strong barbed iron head fastened to a short piece of wood to which a long line (*bē·tma-*) is attached. When a turtle or large fish is struck the harpoon detaches itself from the shaft, which floats and is picked up after the capture has been effected.

[NOTE.—A harpooner almost invariably follows up a successful cast by plunging into the water, lest in the act of dragging the line the harpoon should slip out of the wound and his victim should thus escape.]

11. *rō·ko-*.[1] Generic name of the various kinds of canoes made in recent years[2] by the aborigines of South Andaman and adjacent parts, where, owing to the facility of obtaining iron tools, large dug-outs, called *gī·lyanga-*, capable of accommodating twenty to forty persons, are constructed in place of the small outrigger canoes (*chā·rigma-*) with which the other tribes have still to content themselves. They are usually made of the *Sterculia villosa* (Andam., *bā·ja-*), and are often ornamentally painted.

[NOTE.—The outrigger is called *tel-*, and is always made of the wood of *mail·-* (one of the *Sterculiaceæ*), which is soft and light.]

11*a*. *wāl·igma-*.[3] Paddle: these are not made by women, nor are they of any prescribed size, this being regulated merely by the fancy of the maker, and the material at his disposal; they are frequently adorned by women with chevrons[4] (*jō·bo-tārtā·nga-*) of *kōi·ob-* (item 60) or *tā·la-ōg-* (item 58).

12. *yôto-tē·pinga-*. Turtle-net, made by men,[5] of a stout cord (*bē·tma-*), which is prepared from the bark fibre of the *Melochia velutina* (Andam., *al·aba-*); the meshes vary in size according to the fancy or skill of the maker.[6]

13. *dā·kar-*.[7] Bucket made by the Great Andaman tribes of the wood used in constructing canoes, *i.e.*, *Sterculia villosa*, with a loop of cane to form the handle; the implement used in hollowing out these vessels is the blade of the adze (*wō·lo-*, item 15), which is detached from its handle and fastened to a straight piece of wood so as to form a sort of chisel

[NOTE.—The Little Andaman and other *jār·awa-* buckets are made in the same manner, but are much larger and superior in every way; they are, moreover, neatly ornamented round the sides with stripes of cane, evenly laid on and fastened at the rim by plaiting.]

[1] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 69.
[2] *Vide* Part III, "Navigation," paragraph 4, and footnote.
[3] *Vide* Plate VI, fig. 70
[4] *Vide* Part III, "Ornamentation," paragraph 6.
[5] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 60.
[6] *Vide* Part III, "String," paragraph 6.
[7] *Vide* Plate VII, fig. 14.

765 neck, usually, but not always, by the widow, widower or nearest relative. Mourning closes with a ceremonial dance and the removal of the clay. The ceremonies connected with the disposal of the dead are conventional, reverential and by no means without elaboration in detail.

V. Arts.

324 **Stone Implements.**—The only stone cutting implement known to the Andamanese is the quartz flake chipped off, never worked, and held between the fingers for shaving and tattooing, and shells and fish bones are used for the small blades of the peculiar adze of this people, and for arrow points, scraping and cutting. A *cyrena* valve is the ordinary knife and scraper. Hammers, anvils, hones, and oven-stones consist of natural stones. They have never made celts.

177 The ends of glass bottles for some years, and iron from wrecks for a long time past, have been substituted for the indigenous implements, when and where procurable. The object of the long series of murderous raids made by the inland Jarawas on the outlying parts of the Penal Settlement has now been proved to have been made in search for iron. The implements on the whole are coarsely and roughly made.

411 **Weapons.**—The weapons of the Andamanese are bow and arrow, harpoon, fish spear, pig spear, and they have never had any notion of poisoning the blades, which however sometimes inflict dangerous septic wounds from dirt, though as a rule they are kept bright as a matter of pride. Barbed arrows and harpoons with loose heads are used for catching and pulling up game in the jungles and marking where turtle or large fish are sinking.

Domestic Arts.—Excellent information with illustrations on the domestic and other arts of the Andamanese is to be found in a minutely accurate work, Man's *Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands.*

283 **String and Netting.**—String for nets and all purposes is twisted, often neatly, from the inner bark of creepers. Large nets of this string are made for driving turtle and hand-nets for prawns and small fish and for wallets. Stout cord is made from the inner bark of the *melochia velutina.* Whole, split and scraped canes are used as binders.

285 **Weaving.**—The weaving is good, neat and stout, and baskets and mats are thus well made from strips of canes.

323 **Pottery.**—The unglazed circular clay cooking pots with rounded or pointed bottoms, to the Andamanese very valuable, are built up by hand, sun-dried and then baked, but not thoroughly, in the fire. They are often encased in basket work for safety. Their manufacture, form and ornament are typical of the Stone Age generally.

322 **Wood and Cane work.**—Buckets are hollowed out of wood or cut from the joints of the bamboo. Canoes are hollowed out of whole trunks of light, soft timber by the adze without the use of fire, do not last long and are only fair sea boats. They are however capable of holding many people and a good deal of light cargo.

301 **Ornamentation, Personal and Domestic.**—The personal ornaments made are—bunches and strips of fibres and leaves scraped, cut and hammered, fringes of dentalium shells and straw-coloured wreaths of hammered and roasted dendrobium bark. The bones, skulls and jawbones of deceased relatives are also used whole, or broken and scraped to fancy or requirement, as ornaments, besides necklaces of the bones of animals. Tattooing and painting the body are only ornamental to the extent that, in the latter case especially, deviations from the conventional designs are due to personal taste.

353 The only ornaments to dwellings and huts are the heads of turtle, pigs, iguana, paradoxurus killed in hunting. These are hung up partly as ornaments and partly as trophies, but not with any idea of record.

531 Every manufactured article has its own customary conventional line ornament in one or more of three colours and in one or more of eleven patterns approximately achieved only. The colours are red, white and brown from natural earths. The patterns are (1) chevrons, (2) close cross hatch, (3) wide cross hatch, (4) parallel lines, (5) parallels and chevrons combined, (6) lozenges, (7) plait or guilloche, (8) herring-bone, (9) cross cuts, (10) loops, (11) vandyke with scolloped bands and cross lines.

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
ONGE

the felling of the tree, chiselling the lumber and processing it further to give the shape of a canoe. Buckets of wood are also constructed by them from the softwood tree. Two types of baskets are made, the smaller ones are more well-finished than the bigger ones. The former is known as *tolcoaga* and the later *tole-laya*. Such activities have introduced the use of dahs, chisels, and iron files among the Onges, from the iron pieces derived from the sea shores. The other important pieces of their craftsmanship are the beautiful weavings of fibre, tussel of yellow fibre used by the women in their front. However, the art of making the earthen pots has been completely forgotten.

The leisure in their lives has helped the development of some amount of aesthetic senses among the Onges. All the Onges men and women shave their heads with flakes of glass, obtained from the sea-borne glass bottles. The body of the Onges are also painted with white clay which save their skin from insect-bite while red paint serves medicinal purposes if some individual is having fever. In times of mourning, red ochre paint is a taboo.[1]

Early marriage is the custom. The widows are looked down upon by the society. Some incidents of widow murder and drowning are heard. In the married life, the husband is devoted to his wife and both the husband and wife work for collecting their food.

Dances and songs are in vogue and there are practically songs for every occasion and activity. Most of their songs are more plaintive than joyous.

There are three broad divisions of the Onges of the Little Andaman :

(1) *Giremeka-Gobeule* group inhabiting the northeastern coast of the island ;

(2) *Engakwale group* live in the interior of the islands ; and

(3) *Gireraragobeule group* live in the southern and western coasts of the islands.

In spite of all the limitations, the Onges have been considered as one of the happiest people of the world with plenty of food and water to eat and drink and with very few social cankers to fight with. But as is common to all other aborigines of the Andamans, a decline in their number is discernible.

The Sentinelese

The Sentinelese are the least known of all the aborigines of the Anda-

1 The Onge of the Little Andaman—A short guide book ; Anthropological Gallery, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

the arrival of the Negritos in the Andamans from the south; yet more evidence is provided by the Onge arrows. In the Andamans there are two types of arrows, those used for fish, and those for game, the latter also being used against human targets.

The same arrows are found throughout the archipelago, confirming a common origin. Only the dimensions vary from one area to another and that only very slightly; the Onges have both the biggest fishing arrows, and the biggest arrow harpoons, and the Arioto the smallest. In the past the islanders used arrows with from two to four points for fish, but I was unable to find any traces of them; those picked up on North Sentinel some years ago were possibly the last to be made.

The fishing arrow of the Andamans is made basically from the small native bamboo. The Onges remove the knots by scraping them down gradually with *Cyrena* shells, and then cut off a length varying between seventy centimetres and about one metre. Into one end they fix securely a hardwood stick, fifteen to twenty centimetres long. This foreshaft takes the head, now nearly always iron, but in the past made of wood, fish spines or pig bone. In the kitchen-middens I also found heads made out of shaped pieces of *Tridacna*. The three parts of the arrow are then bound together with very thin waxed fibres, wound carefully round and round, great care being taken to prevent the bamboo shaft splitting where the foreshaft is forced in. The completed arrow finishes up 1–1·15 metres long overall. The head is barbed, to hold the fish once it is hit; to get it out the whole arrow has to be pulled through. Sometimes, but not always, the shaft has a notch in it, to take the cord, care being taken to make the notch never more than two centimetres from any knot, to avoid any possibility of the shaft splitting. Alternatively, splits are prevented by binding waxed thread tightly round the shaft.

The hunting arrow, or arrow harpoon, is an intelligent adaptation, the result of acute observation of wild life, and is more complicated than the fishing arrow which is intended only to pierce the victim. The hunting arrow must not only score a hit, it must also prevent the animal from escaping into the undergrowth and force it to reveal its position. The harpoon holds the victim cruelly and securely, and the excruciating pain caused by the drag of the cord forces the animal to reveal its position by its cries of agony. The

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Appendix

Below is given a brief summary of the evidence which in the author's opinion supports his view that the culture of the Andaman Islanders dates back at least to the Palaeolithic era.

1 ABSENCE OF STONE IMPLEMENTS

There are in the Andamans abundant sources of stones suitable for shaping into tools. Despite this I found no traces whatever of any stone implements even in the lowest strata of the kitchen-middens, nor is there any evidence of their being used either in the more recent past or at the present time. Until the very recent introduction of iron the Onges always (as the kitchen-middens confirm) made tools solely of wood, with the addition of parts made from *Tridacna* shells, shaped by long and patient rubbing against stone. The only objects remotely approaching the definition of stone implements are the splinters of quartz or obsidian which are carried in the hair, and used as razors or, in the Arioto only, for primitive tattooing. These splinters, which are in no way shaped after being broken off, are thrown away as soon as they become blunt, and a new piece of quartz is crudely struck from a lump, by men or women indiscriminately. The existence of this one stone implement does not, in my view, justify the classification of the Onges (or the Andamanese in general) as a true Palaeolithic people; it would be more reasonable to class them as prelithic.

2 ABSENCE OF METAL WORKING

Even today the Onges' knowledge of metal working is confined to rubbing pieces of iron against stone to reduce them to the required shape. They have no knowledge of how to forge it, nor have they the tools to do so. Iron is clearly a very recent introduction, the importance of which the